

# BCS PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATE IN DATA PROTECTION V9.9

## SYLLABUS

This professional certificate is not regulated by the following United Kingdom Regulators - Ofqual, Qualifications Wales, CCEA or SQA.



---

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	.....	<b>03</b>
<b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>	.....	<b>03</b>
<b>CERTIFICATION</b>	.....	<b>04</b>
<b>TRAINER CRITERIA</b>	.....	<b>04</b>
<b>SYLLABUS</b>	.....	<b>05</b>
<b>EXAMINATION FORMAT</b>	.....	<b>29</b>
<b>QUESTION WEIGHTING</b>	.....	<b>30</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED READING</b>	.....	<b>31</b>
<b>DOCUMENT CHANGE HISTORY</b>	.....	<b>33</b>



**INTRODUCTION AND  
OVERVIEW**

---

# INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of UK data protection law, incorporating the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 18), as well as the EU General Data Protection Regulation (EU GDPR), along with an understanding of how they are applied in practice, is important for any organisation processing personal information. The BCS Practitioner Certificate in Data Protection is designed for those with some data protection responsibilities in an organisation or who, for other reasons, wish to achieve and demonstrate a broad understanding of the law.

This version of the syllabus has been updated to take account of the DUA Act (Commencement No 6 and Transitional and Saving Provisions) Regulations 2026, dated 29 January, enact 42 provisions amending the UK's data protection legislative framework. Of these provisions, 41 took effect on Thursday, 5 February, while the remaining provision concerning complaints by data subjects is scheduled to take effect on 19 June.

---

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

The candidate should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key provisions of data protection legislation in the following areas:

- Context of data protection legislation.
- Principles of data protection and applicable terminology.
- Lawful basis for processing of personal data.
- Accountability principle.
- Obligations of controllers, joint controllers and data processors.
- International data transfers under EU and UK GDPR.
- Data subject rights.
- The role of independent supervisory authorities (ISAs) and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
- Breaches, enforcement and liability.
- Processing of personal data in relation to children.
- Specific provisions in data protection legislation of particular relevance to public authorities. (7.5%).
- Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations (PECR) 2003 and amendments subsequent to 2021.
- Application of data protection legislation in key areas of industry.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the processing of personal data.



# CERTIFICATION SUITABILITY AND OVERVIEW

This certification is aimed at those candidates who have, or wish to have, some responsibility for data protection within an organisation and need to understand the changes that the EU GDPR, the UK GDPR and the UK Data Protection Act 2018 have brought to data protection in practice and what needs to be done to steer their organisations towards compliance. Candidates will need a good standard of written English and maths. Centres must ensure that learners have the potential and opportunity to gain the certification successfully.

The certificate will also be useful for others who wish to obtain and demonstrate a broad understanding and application of the UK's data protection regime. It is ideal for those candidates who already hold the Foundation Certificate in

Data Protection and who want to gain a more in-depth knowledge of interpreting and applying the principles of data protection legislation and the UK & EU GDPR in particular. This certification is likely to be of particular benefit to those working in the following areas:

- Data protection and privacy
- Information governance, risk and compliance
- Data management
- Project management
- Directors/Senior managers with data protection responsibilities

Candidates can study for this award by attending a training course provided by a BCS accredited training provider or through self-study.

TOTAL QUALIFICATION TIME	GUIDED LEARNING HOURS	INDEPENDENT LEARNING	ASSESSMENT TIME
34 hours	22.5 hours	10 hours	90 minutes



## TRAINER CRITERIA



It is recommended that to deliver this award effectively, trainers should possess:

- The BCS Practitioner Certificate in Data Protection.
- A minimum of two years' training experience or 1 year with a recognised qualification.
- Have a minimum of three years' experience in the area of data protection.
- Be familiar with the structure and text of EU & UK GDPR and have a comprehensive understanding of its impact upon the practical implementation of data protection compliance.



SYLLABUS

---

# SYLLABUS

## 1. CONTEXT OF DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION. (7.5%)

### 1.1 Explain the concepts of data protection and privacy.

#### Indicative content

- a. Describe an individual's right to private and family life.
- b. Explain the relevance of confidentiality and respect for home and family life and correspondence.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to define the terms 'data protection' and 'privacy' and explain the differences between them. What do data protection and privacy mean? Why is data protection important?

---

### 1.2 Describe the history of data protection in the UK.

#### Indicative content

- a. United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- b. European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), (Article 8 – Respect for privacy and family life, Article 10 – Freedom of Expression).
- c. Council of Europe Convention 108, 1981, its implementation by the Data Protection Act 1984, and updating of Convention 108.
- d. OECD Guidelines on the Protection of Privacy and Transborder Flows of Personal Data 2013.
- e. Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC.
- f. Human Rights Act 1998.
- g. Data Protection Act 1998.
- h. Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulation (PECR) 2003 and amendments subsequent to 2021.
- i. General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679.
- j. UK Data Protection Act 2018.

- k. The purpose of the Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.
- l. UK GDPR.
- m. Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.
- n. DUA's role as the substantive legislative overhaul (commenced in staged phases from 20 August 2025 onward).

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to describe the evolution of the legislative framework for data protection in the European Union (EU) and the UK but are not expected to have a detailed knowledge of the content of the above, or the chronological order.

---

### **1.3 Describe the territorial scope and jurisdiction of GDPR.**

#### **Indicative content**

- a. Territorial scope and jurisdiction of EU GDPR.
- b. Territorial scope and jurisdiction of UK GDPR.
- c. Clarification of UK territorial scope independently of EU GDPR.

#### **Guidance**

Candidates should be able to describe how the wider territorial scope and jurisdiction of the EU GDPR and UK GDPR impacts on the processing of personal data by global organisations.

---

### **1.4 When a representative of the controller is needed.**

#### **Indicative content**

- a. European Representatives for UK organisations.
- b. UK Representatives for non-UK controllers..

#### **Guidance**

Candidates should be able to outline the obligations for controllers in relation to appointing European and UK representatives.

---



---

# SYLLABUS

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF DATA PROTECTION AND APPLICABLE TERMINOLOGY. (5%)

### 2.1 Define the following key items of terminology.

#### Indicative content

- a. Personal data.
- b. Special Category data.
- c. Biometric and Genetic data.
- d. Criminal Offence data (Article 10 UK GDPR/ Section 10 & 11 Data Protection Act 2018).
- e. Relevant International Law.
- f. Pseudonymisation and anonymisation.
- g. Purely personal and household purposes.
- h. Research, Archiving and Statistics (RAS)
- i. Profiling.
- j. Data subject.

- k. Controller.
- l. Data Processor.
- m. Recipients and third parties.
- n. Direct marketing.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of all the key definitions relating to personal data under UK GDPR. Candidates should be able to explain how the terms pseudonymisation and anonymisation relate to the processing of personal data.

---

### 2.2 Demonstrate how the following UK GDPR principles regulate the processing of personal data.

#### Indicative content

- a. Lawfulness, fairness and transparency - Article 5 (1)(a).
- b. Purpose limitation - Article 5 (1)(b) and 8 (a).
- c. Data minimisation – Article 5 (1)(c).
- d. Accuracy – Article 5 (1)(d).
- e. Storage limitation – Article 5 (1)(e).
- f. Integrity and confidentiality – Article 5 (1)(f).

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to define and explain the UK GDPR personal data processing principles. They should also be able to explain the considerations when processing existing personal data for a new purpose.

---

# SYLLABUS

## 3. LAWFUL BASES FOR PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA. (5%)

### 3.1 Illustrate the lawful bases to process personal data listed under (Article 6) of the UK GDPR and as displayed below.

#### Indicative content

- a. Recognised Legitimate Interests:
  - Public-interest (crime prevention, safeguarding).
  - UK GDPR Annex 1
- b. Legitimate Interests:
  - direct marketing
  - internal administrative transfers
  - network security.
- c. DUAA's influence on lawful basis selection.
- d. Consent.
- e. Contract

- f. Legal obligation.
- g. Vital interests.
- h. Public tasks.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain seven lawful bases for processing personal data and explain when these lawful bases are applicable. For RLI, balancing test is not required, only for checking whether processing is necessary. For legitimate Interests, full legitimate assessment is required.



### 3.2 Describe the conditions permitted for processing special category of personal data listed under Article 9 of UK GDPR.

#### Indicative content

- a. Conditions for processing special category data.
- b. Special category data, the additional conditions required and safeguards (Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018).
- c. Substantial public interest conditions (Part 2, Schedule 1 Data Protection Act 2018).

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to identify the ten conditions for processing special category data required in Article 9 of the UK GDPR and which five require additional conditions and safeguards as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018. They should understand when an Appropriate Policy document is required. Candidates should also have an awareness of the substantial public interest conditions but there is no requirement to know these in detail.



---

### 3.3 Explain the rules for processing criminal offence data.

#### Indicative content

- a. The definition of criminal offence data.
- b. The rules for processing criminal offence data.
- c. DUAA amendments to Part 3 Law enforcement framework. .

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to describe the range of information about offenders or suspected offenders which is classed as criminal offence data including criminal activity, allegations, investigations etc. They should also be able to explain the processing rules for criminal offence data and the restrictions on maintaining registers of criminal convictions. Candidates should explain how the risks associated with criminal offence data affect other data processing obligations.

---



---

# SYLLABUS

## 4. ACCOUNTABILITY PRINCIPLE. (15%)

### 4.1 Identify the accountability and data governance obligation (Article 5 (2) and Article 24).

#### Indicative content

- a. The accountability obligation under UK GDPR: including responsibility for compliance and demonstration of compliance.
- b. The requirements and purpose of a privacy management framework to meet the accountability obligation.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain why a controller needs to take responsibility for compliance with the UK GDPR, and the key measures that can be implemented to demonstrate compliance such as policies, training, reporting structures, and risk assessment and evaluation processes.

---

### 4.2 Describe the purpose of a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) and when risks arising from one may need prior consultation with the supervisory authority/ Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (Article 36).

#### Indicative content

- a. What a DPIA is and its purpose.
- b. What to take into consideration when assessing risks identified through DPIAs.
- c. When it is a mandatory requirement to consult the ICO following a DPIA.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain what a DPIA is, when it is needed, the difference between the legal requirement to carry out a DPIA (due to the nature of the data being processed) and when it is good practice, how risks should be evaluated and when it is a requirement to consult the ICO.

---

---

### 4.3 Demonstrate the process of conducting a DPIA (Article 35).

#### Indicative content

- a. ICO's revised DPIA guidance.
- b. How a DPIA is undertaken and what needs to be documented.
- c. The process for evaluating risks and considering mitigations.
- d. Identify who else should be consulted when completing a DPIA.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to identify the need to conduct a DPIA prior to high-risk processing and the requirement to document within the DPIA the nature, scope, context and purposes of processing. Candidates should recognise the need to consult with stakeholders, the Data Protection Officer (DPO) if one is in place and potentially data processors. Candidates should demonstrate knowledge of how high risks should be evaluated and recorded and the need to identify and suggest the implementation of mitigations.

---

### 4.4 Explain what a record of processing activity (RoPA) is, the information it should contain and why this is important (Article 30).

#### Indicative content

- a. Definition and purpose of a RoPA.
- b. Information to be included in a RoPA.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain what a RoPA is and why it is required to assist a controller in meeting their Accountability obligations. The candidate should be able to describe the information that needs to be documented in a RoPA as outlined in UK GDPR.



---

# SYLLABUS

## 4.5 Outline the interplay with privacy notices (Articles 13 and 14).

### Indicative content

- a. Describe what a privacy notice is, in respect of the UK GDPR transparency principle.
- b. Outline what information needs to be provided to data subjects with regards to their personal data when it is collected (i) directly from the individual and (ii) collected about the individual from other sources.

### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain what a privacy notice is, what information it should contain and how the individual is made aware of when their personal data is collected and how it is used. The candidate should also be aware of how controllers can present their privacy notices to ensure they fulfil the transparency principle and make it easy and simple for people to access and understand.

---

## 4.6 Demonstrate how to adopt a 'data protection by design and by default' approach (Article 25).

### Indicative content

- a. Data protection by design.
- b. Data protection by default.
- c. Responsibilities for compliance.
- d. Article 25 (1A) and (1B): Information society services and children.

### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain the concepts of data protection by design and default and the requirements for this under UK GDPR. Candidates should be able to describe how controllers can undertake this in practice, who is responsible for compliance and how it links in with the DPIA process. The candidate should be able to describe the specific obligations for controllers providing information society services likely to be accessed by children.

---

---

**4.7 Identify appropriate information security measures (Article 32).**

**Indicative content**

- a. UK GDPR and the importance of information security.
- b. Organisational measures.
- c. Technical measures.
- d. Data processors and information security.

**Guidance**

Candidates should be able to explain what security measures controllers and processors must take to secure data.

---

**4.8 Explain the designation, position and tasks of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) (Articles 37 to 39).**

**Indicative content**

- a. Outline the requirement to appoint a DPO.
- b. Describe the position and remit of an appointed DPO.
- c. Identify the tasks of a DPO.

**Guidance**

Candidates should be able to describe the criteria for appointing a DPO, the remit and purpose of the position and the key tasks that the role requires the DPO to undertake.

---

**4.9 Explain the scope of the DPO role in monitoring compliance and managing risks through a Privacy Management programme (Article 39 1.b).**

**Indicative content**

- a. Role of the DPO in monitoring compliance.
- b. Approach of the DPO in assessing, evaluating and measuring risks.

**Guidance**

Candidates should be aware of the role of the DPO in identifying, evaluating and measuring risks connected with data processing, and the approach to monitoring compliance within a controller organisation. Candidates should be aware of the remit of the DPO in respect to accountability for compliance (they are not accountable) and the required action if advice from a DPO is not followed.

---

---

# SYLLABUS

## 5. OBLIGATIONS OF CONTROLLERS, JOINT CONTROLLERS AND DATA PROCESSORS. (10%)

### 5.1 Explain controller and processor obligations (Articles 24 and 28).

#### Indicative content

- a. The obligations of controllers.
- b. The obligations of processors.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to identify and explain the distinctions between the responsibilities and obligations of controllers and processors under UK GDPR, when processing personal data. These include record keeping, responsibilities for security and compliance with international data transfer requirements.

---

### 5.2 Describe the concept of joint controllers (Article 26).

#### Indicative content

- a. Joint controllers.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to define what a joint controller is and their roles and responsibilities in respect of data processing. Candidates should also identify what impact joint controllers may have on the data subject when processing their personal data.

---

---

**5.3 Describe the act of processing under the authority of a controller or processor (Article 29).**

**Indicative content**

- a. Processing under the authority of a controller or processor.

**Guidance**

Candidates should be able to explain the requirements concerning the processing of personal data on the instructions of the controller.

---

**5.4 Explain what is in a contract with a processor and when it would be necessary.**

**Indicative content**

- a. Contractual clauses under Article 28.
- b. When is a contract with a processor required?

**Guidance**

Candidates should be able to explain the legal contracts required when a controller uses a processor to process personal data on their behalf and the UK GDPR stipulations around what needs to be included in such a contract. The candidate should also be aware of the arrangements that are required if a processor engages a sub-processor.

---

---

# SYLLABUS

## 6. INTERNATIONAL DATA TRANSFERS UNDER EU AND UK GDPR. (2.5%)

**6.1** Recognise the general principles for transferring personal data to third countries from both the UK and the EU and illustrate what issues might arise from each of the following mechanisms.

### Indicative content

- a. Restricted transfers under UK GDPR and the mechanisms/safeguards for ensuring these are undertaken lawfully.
- b. UK-specific adequacy regarding transfers under EU GDPR.
- c. DUAA's staged divergence on transfer mechanisms.
- d. Modernised transfer risk approach.

### Guidance

Candidates should explain the importance of ensuring the free flow of personal data against the considerations required when personal data is transferred to a third country that does not have adequate protection in place.

They should be able to explain the mechanisms in place which permit lawful international transfers. Demonstrate the implications of data transfers from the UK to Europe and vice versa since Brexit.



---

# SYLLABUS

## 7. DATA SUBJECT RIGHTS. (5%)

### 7.1 Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the key rights granted to individuals (Articles 12 to 17 and 21 to 22A-D).

#### Indicative content

- a. All rights under Article 12, 12A.
- b. Being informed (transparency), including of further processing compatibility (Article 13 and Article 14).
- c. SARs under updated ICO guidance (2026).
- d. Prohibition against enforced subject access requests (Section 184 of DPA 18).
- e. Void contractual terms relating to health records (Section 185 of DPA 18).
- f. Rectification (Article 16).
- g. Erasure (Right to be forgotten) (Article 17).
- h. Objection (Article 21).
- i. Automated individual decision making and

profiling (Article 22A-D).

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain in detail the different rights that the UK GDPR grants to individuals whose personal data is processed and how controllers should ensure that they can fulfil requests from data subjects in respect of these rights.

---

### 7.2 Express awareness of the following rights in addition to the above.

#### Indicative content

- a. Restriction of processing (Article 18).
- b. Obligation to notify the rectification, erasure or restriction to recipients and the data subject (Article 19).
- c. Data portability (Article 20).

#### Guidance

Candidates should have an awareness of these additional rights but are not expected to know them in detail.

---

### 7.3 Describe the restrictions and exemptions that may affect data subject rights.

#### Indicative content

- a. Restrictions (Article 23).
- b. Exemptions (Schedule 2 - Parts 1 to 4 of Data Protection Act 2018).

#### Guidance

Candidates should have an awareness of the restrictions and exemptions that may impact on an individual having their rights fulfilled under UK GDPR.

---

**7.4 Explain the fundamental rights of information requests.**

**Indicative content**

- a. Freedom of Information Act (FoIA).
- b. Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

**Guidance**

Candidates should explain what these rights and regulations are and their purpose. They should explain how requests can be made, what they are expected to do in response to requests, and how long they have to respond.

Candidates should consider any exemptions to the FoIA and EIR. They should have an awareness of absolute and qualified exemptions and have an awareness of how the public interest test and prejudice test applies. They should also have an awareness of the internal review process.



---

# SYLLABUS

## 8. THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT SUPERVISORY AUTHORITIES AND THE ICO. (7.5%)

### 8.1 Explain the role and importance of Independent Supervisory Authorities (ISAs).

#### Indicative content

- a. Awareness-only reference to EU ISAs.
- b. UK focus following DUAA divergence

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain the role of ISAs, the importance of their independence, and an overview of their roles/powers. They should also be aware of mechanisms to support cooperation and consistency between ISAs.

---

### 8.2 Explain the role of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

#### Indicative content

- a. As a regulator.
- b. Investigation and correction (Article 58).
- c. Enforcement of regulations.
- d. Data protection audits by the ICO.
- e. As a body that creates guidance and codes of practice.
- f. Promote public awareness and understanding of the risks, rules, safeguards and rights in relation to processing.
- g. Promotion of approved privacy seals, certification schemes and availability of commonly used standards.
- h. Advice and reporting to Parliament, the UK Government and other bodies.
- i. Duties in relation to functions under the data

- protection legislation.
- j. Transition to Information Commission and new statutory duties.

#### Guidance

Candidates should demonstrate detailed knowledge of the ICO's role as the UK Data Protection Regulator and their tasks and responsibilities. Candidates should be aware of the impact of the ICO on controllers with respect to enforcement activity, audits, guidance, codes of practice and duties relating to innovation, crime, children's data protection, and other matters.

---

# SYLLABUS

## 9. BREACHES, ENFORCEMENT AND LIABILITY (12.5%)

### 9.1 Explain what constitutes a personal data breach and the information required for reporting.

#### Indicative content

- a. Identifying a data protection breach.
- b. Assessing a data protection breach.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to define a data protection breach and be aware of the varying kinds of incidents that may constitute a breach. They should recognise and explain the process for risk-assessing data breaches to ensure that they are able to gather all necessary information required for reporting if required.

---

### 9.2 Explain when the obligations arise to report breaches of personal data (Articles 33 and 34 UK GDPR).

#### Indicative content

- a. To the ICO.
- b. Data subject.

#### Guidance

Candidates should explain the criteria which determines whether a data breach needs formal notification to the ICO and the data subject. They should be aware of reporting timescales and the necessary documentation that needs to be provided. Candidates also need to understand the role that processors have if a breach occurs.

---

### 9.3 Explain how a data protection complaint should be handled.

#### Indicative content

- a. What constitutes a data protection complaint.
- b. Role of the controller following a data protection complaint.
- c. Role of the ICO following a data protection complaint.
- d. DUAA Complaint Framework.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain an individual's right to raise a data protection complaint about a controller concerning how their personal data has been handled. They should be able to describe what constitutes a data protection complaint and the process ensuring a complaint is handled appropriately.

---

**9.4 Describe the sanctions that could be imposed as a result of a personal data breach or data protection complaint.**

**Indicative content**

- a. Information Notice (Section 142); Information Order (section 145); Assessment Notice (Section 146); Interview notice (Section 148A); Enforcement notice (Section 149 Data Protection Act 2018).
- b. Reprimands.
- c. Administrative fines and their levels (Article 83).
- d. Tier 1 fines (up to 2% (£8.7m) under the UK GDPR).
- e. Tier 2 fines (up to 4% (£17.5m) under the UK GDPR).

- f. Availability of multiple tiers of fines.

**Guidance**

Candidates should be able to explain the differing sanctions and penalties that can be imposed on controllers as a result of upheld data breaches or complaints. Candidates should be able to identify what level of fines are applied to different breaches.

---

**9.5 Describe the following liabilities:**

**Indicative content**

- a. Compensation.
- b. Liability between controller and processor.
- c. Awareness of the existence of criminal liability regarding breaches under the Data Protection Act 2018.
- d. Other legislation to be considered.

**Guidance**

Candidates should be able to explain the liabilities of controllers and processors in respect to data protection breaches and claims from individuals.

---

**9.6 Identify the role of tribunal and judicial courts.**

**Indicative content**

- a. Appeals against decisions of the ICO.
- b. Adjudication and enforcement of legal claims for data protection breaches.

**Guidance**

Candidates should understand the way courts and tribunals manage appeals and legal claims.

---

---

# SYLLABUS

## 10. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA IN RELATION TO CHILDREN. (2.5%)

### 10.1 Explain how data protection legislation applies to children.

#### Indicative content

- a. Explain the differences between the definitions of “child” within the UK GDPR (Article 8) and EU GDPR (Article 8).
- b. Describe the reasons outlined in Recital 38 of the UK GDPR as to why children’s data requires special protection when being processed.
- c. Explain the rights children have over their personal data.
- d. Explain what Information Society Services means.
- e. Explain what “children’s higher data protection matters” means per Article 25 (1A) and (1B).
- f. The ICO Children’s Code: the standards that comprise the code and who needs to conform

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain the additional data protection requirements that should be in place to protect the personal data of children. This includes additional security measures on systems, identifying an appropriate lawful basis for data processing and if relying on consent when offering an online service to a child, limiting this to children aged 13 and over, when in the UK. Further protection must be implemented when using children’s data for marketing purposes or creating profiles.



---

# SYLLABUS

## 11. SPECIFIC PROVISIONS IN DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION OF PARTICULAR RELEVANCE TO PUBLIC AUTHORITIES. (7.5%)

### 11.1 Define the meanings of public authority and public body and how it relates to both the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR (Section 7 of Data Protection Act 2018).

#### Indicative content

- a. Lawful basis – public interest task (Article 6 (1) (e)).
- b. Interplay between recognised legitimate interests article 6(1)(ea), legitimate interests 6(1)(f) and Section 7(2) and the performance of their tasks.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to explain the definitions of public authority and public body and how it relates to the processing of personal data with particular focus on the lawfulness of processing definitions in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

---

### 11.2 Explain the provisions relating to DPOs for public authorities.

#### Indicative content

- a. Mandatory requirement to appoint a DPO (Article 37 (1)(a)).

#### Guidance

Candidates should be aware of the requirements outlined in the UK GDPR regarding a DPO for public authorities.

---

### 11.3 Explain awareness of the existence of the exemptions for health, social work and education (Schedule 3, DPA 18).

#### Indicative content

- a. Health data.
- b. Social work data.
- c. Education data, examination scripts and marks.
- d. Child abuse data.

#### Guidance

Candidates are expected to have an awareness of the existence of the exemptions, but they will not be expected to detail the individual exemptions.

---

# SYLLABUS

## 12. PRIVACY AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS (EC DIRECTIVE) REGULATIONS (PECR) 2003 AND SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS TO 2021. (5%)

### 12.1 Explain the relationship between PECR and the GDPR.

#### Indicative content

- a. Objective and broad scope of PECR (email, phone, SMS, in-app messaging, push notifications).
- b. PECR marketing rules.
- c. Soft opt-in (commercial and charities)
- d. Role of the Information Commissioner's Office including updated enforcement powers via the DUAA in relation to PEC Regs.
- e. Investigating complaints.
- f. Issuing codes of practice.
- g. Updated breach obligations (Section 111 DUAA, 20 August 2025).

#### Guidance

Candidates should be able to describe the relationship between PECR and the UK GDPR and the key aspects of the Regulations, including: marketing permissions, the privacy of customers who use communications networks or services in relation to traffic or location data, the security of public communications services and cookies (see more in 13.3).

Candidates should also explain the role of the ICO in relation to PECR, notably with regard to penalties for breaches of PECR.



---

# SYLLABUS

## 13. APPLICATION OF DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION IN KEY AREAS OF INDUSTRY. (10%)

### 13.1 Recognise the data protection implications within the ICO Employment Practices Guidance.

#### Indicative content

- a. Employment Practices Guidance for data protection compliance.

#### Guidance

Candidates will be aware of the ICO Guidance on Employment Practices.

---

### 13.2 Describe how the use of video surveillance and CCTV is governed by data protection law.

#### Indicative content

- a. Types of video surveillance and how it is impacted by data protection law.

#### Guidance

Candidates should be aware of the Information Commissioner's Office's guidance on video surveillance e.g. CCTV surveillance, automatic number plate recognition, facial recognition technology, body-worn video etc.

---

---

**13.3 Identify how the use of cookies and digital technologies is governed by data protection law.**

**Indicative content**

- a. Cookies and similar digital technologies including amendments via the DUAA..
- b. Rules on using cookies and similar digital technologies.
- c. Relationship between Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulation (PECR) 2003 and UK GDPR cookie requirements.

**Guidance**

Candidates should be able to define what constitutes a cookie or similar digital technology and have awareness of the rules around using these concerning the impact on data protection. They should demonstrate awareness of the overlap between the cookie requirements in UK GDPR and PECR.

---

**13.4 Explain how data sharing practices are governed by data protection law (ICO Data Sharing Code of Practice).**

**Indicative content**

- a. Data sharing considerations as outlined under the Data Sharing Code of Practice.
- b. Ensuring compliance with data protection legislation when sharing data.
- c. Identify what should be included in a data sharing agreement.

**Guidance**

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the Data Sharing Code of Practice and explain how these requirements are governed by data protection law. In addition, the candidate should be able to identify what information is required for inclusion in a data sharing agreement.

---

# SYLLABUS

## 14. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND THE PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA. (5%)

### 14.1 Analyse the benefits versus the risks of AI for individuals and organisations.

#### Indicative content

- a. What is meant by AI.
- b. The impact on individuals and organisations.

#### Guidance

Candidates should explain what AI means and the benefits and risks of AI to individuals and organisations. They should explain the importance of adopting a risk-based approach when utilising AI and how this should be embedded into organisational governance.

---

### 14.2 Explain the process of completing a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) where AI is used.

#### Indicative content

- a. How the use of AI impacts the process for completing a DPIA and what needs to be recorded.

#### Guidance

Candidates should outline what needs to be considered when a Data Protection Impact Assessment is completed for AI.

---

### 14.3 Analyse the impact of AI on the principles and concepts of data protection.

#### Indicative content

- a. Lawfulness.
- b. Fairness.
- c. Transparency.
- d. Data minimisation.
- e. Security.
- f. Controller/Processor obligations.
- g. Individual rights.

#### Guidance

Candidates should understand the impact AI has on key areas of data protection.

---

# EXAMINATION FORMAT

This award is assessed by completing an invigilated online exam that candidates will only be able to access at the date and time they are registered to attend.

Adjustments and/or additional time can be requested in line with the [BCS reasonable adjustments policy](#) for candidates with a disability or other special considerations, including English as a second language.

## TYPE

40 MULTIPLE CHOICE  
QUESTIONS

## DURATION

90 MINUTES

## SUPERVISED

YES  
THIS EXAM WILL BE SUPERVISED

## OPEN BOOK

NO  
(NO MATERIALS CAN  
BE TAKEN INTO THE  
EXAMINATION ROOM).

## PASSMARK

(65%)  
26/40

## DELIVERY

DIGITAL OR PAPER BASED.

---

# QUESTION WEIGHTING

Each primary subject heading in this syllabus is assigned a percentage weighting. The purpose of this is:

- Guidance on the proportion of content allocated to each topic area.
- Guidance on the proportion of questions in the exam.

## Syllabus area

- 1 Context of data protection legislation (7.5%)
- 2 Principles of data protection and applicable terminology (5%)
- 3 Lawful bases for processing personal data (5%)
- 4 Accountability principle (15%)
- 5 Obligations of controllers, joint controllers and data processors (10%)
- 6 International data transfers under EU and UK GDPR (2.5%)
- 7 Data subject rights (5%)
- 8 The role of independent supervisory authorities (ISAs) and the ICO (7.5%)
- 9 Breaches, enforcement and liability (12.5%)
- 10 Processing of personal data in relation to children (2.5%)
- 11 Specific provisions in data protection legislation of particular relevance to public authorities (7.5%)
- 12 Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations (PECR) 2003 and amendments subsequent to 2021 (5%)
- 13 Application of data protection legislation in key areas of industry (10%)
- 14 AI and the processing of personal data (5%)

---

# RECOMMENDED READING

**IMPORTANT: Legislation, codes of conduct and guidance are subject to change. Candidates should ensure they are referring to the most up to date version.**

Legislation (can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk>)

UK Data Protection Act 2018

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/pdfs/ukpga\\_20180012\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/pdfs/ukpga_20180012_en.pdf)

Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/2426/contents/made>

EU Regulation 679 General Data Protection Regulation

<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/COM-2016-679-F1-EN-MAIN.PDF>

The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/419/contents/made>

UK ICO Guidance on AI and Data Protection

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/artificial-intelligence/guidance-on-ai-and-data-protection/>

UK ICO Guidance on AI and Data Protection Toolkit

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/artificial-intelligence/guidance-on-ai-and-data-protection/ai-and-data-protection-risk-toolkit/>

UK ICO Children

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/childrens-information/children-and-the-uk-gdpr/>

Employment Practices Guidance

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/employment/>

Guidance on Surveillance and CCTV

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/cctv-and-video-surveillance/guidance-on-video-surveillance-including-cctv/>

Data Sharing: A Code of Practice

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-sharing/data->



---

# OTHER BACKGROUND MATERIALS

UK ICO Guide to Data Protection (GDPR)

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/>

UK ICO Guide to the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations (PECR)

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/direct-marketing-and-privacy-and-electronic-communications/guide-to-pecr/>

European Data Protection Board (EDPB) (Various guidance notes on GDPR)

[https://edpb.europa.eu/edpb\\_en](https://edpb.europa.eu/edpb_en)

UK ICO update report on adtech and real time bidding

<https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/what-we-do/our-work-on-adtech/>

Key case law surrounding the concepts of “controller” and “processor” – SWIFT Case

[https://ec.europa.eu/justice/article-29/documentation/opinion-recommendation/files/2010/wp169\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/justice/article-29/documentation/opinion-recommendation/files/2010/wp169_en.pdf)

Key case law surrounding the controller vs. the data subject and the right to erasure

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62012CJ0131>

UK ICO detailed guidance on subject access requests

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/individual-rights/right-of-access/>

UK ICO Overview – Data Protection and the EU

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-and-the-eu/overview-data-protection-and-the-eu/>

UK ICO Guide to UK GDPR

<https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr-1-1.pdf>

UK ICO Guide to UBinding Corporate Rules

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/international-transfers/guide-to-binding-corporate-rules/>



---

# USING BCS BOOKS

Accredited Training Organisations may include excerpts from BCS books in the course materials. If you wish to use quotes from the books, you will need a license from BCS. To request an appointment, please get in touch with the Head of Publishing at BCS, outlining the material you wish to copy and the use to which it will be put.

---

# DOCUMENT CHANGE HISTORY

Any changes made to the syllabus shall be clearly documented with a change history log. This shall include the latest version number and details of any changes made. The purpose is to identify quickly what changes have been made.

VERSION NUMBER	CHANGES MADE
V1.0 March 2026	Document created.

For further information please contact:

**BCS**

The Chartered Institute for IT  
3 Newbridge Square  
Swindon  
SN1 1BY

**T** +44 (0)1793 417 417

[www.bcs.org](http://www.bcs.org)

© 2026 Reserved. BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT  
All rights reserved. No part of this material protected  
by this copyright may be reproduced or utilised in  
any form, or by any means, electronic or mechanical,  
including photocopying, recording, or by any  
information storage and retrieval system without  
prior authorisation and credit to BCS, The Chartered  
Institute for IT.

Although BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT has used  
reasonable endeavours in compiling the document  
it does not guarantee nor shall it be responsible for  
reliance upon the contents of the document and shall  
not be liable for any false, inaccurate or incomplete  
information. Any reliance placed upon the contents  
by the reader is at the reader's sole risk and BCS, The  
Chartered Institute for IT shall not be liable for any  
consequences of such reliance.

